

Mexicans in their overalls. Nevertheless, it was most interesting to see the countryside with carts wherein travel Indian folk. Their territory is quite interesting scenecally, rolling, and actually wooded country on the shores of Devils Lake, which was once a lake that covered many miles of territory, but now, it is rapidly shrinking.

I visited the Indian Mission of St. Michael, sponsored by the French Canadian Gray Sisters of Mercy, who wear a most unusual habit. They are a friendly group and have taken great pleasure to take us through the Mission, showing us their lovely church and their school for Indian children, dedicated to the Little Flower. Sister Marchand, who was leaving the following day for Montreal, Canada, volunteered to visit and take over a letter to my beloved cousin Antanas Skrupskas, whom I haven't seen since I left Lithuania, and who now lives in Montreal with his wife Antoinette. It was a day before the Feast of Corpus Christi and in the Mission they were preparing for the great feast. The courts were decorated with branches of trees and bunting, for the procession, carrying the Body of Christ on the Cross, with banners written in Sioux. For the opportunity to visit this reservation I'm grateful to Mrs. Jerome Evanson, Educational Director of the Farmers Union. Miss Constance Fisher, of the Human Relations Organization from St. Paul, Minn., and Miss Betty Chandler were the others in our company.

My second opportunity to visit another and the largest Sioux reservation which covers a whole county in N. D. and extends far into S. D. was upon my return from the second Jr. Camp at Medora. Mrs. Susanna Shroyer, leader of the Jr. Activities in the Farmers Union was kind enough to take me there and went hundreds of miles out of her way.

To get Ft. Yates, we had to come to Mandan, once the home and area of the Mandan Indians, which were all but exterminated by the whites and the surviving ones were placed in the Ft. Berthold Reservation. Mandan is an interesting town — just about four blocks wide and two miles long wedged in between the Heart river and the plateau. In Mandan there were a group of Indians from Sioux reservation, all dressed in their regalia to meet an oncoming train. I became acquainted with several of the chieftains; Standing Buffalo and Little Crow, who introduced me to members of their families and chatted most amiably, they even tried to teach me a few Sioux words. Chief Standing Buffalo has even heard of Lithuania! And Chief Little Crow spoke to me a few words in German. Mandan, by the way, is largely populated by German immigrants and the language is still still spoken even by the American born youth.

Our car rolled through interesting country and we finally reached Ft. Yates; a very clean and trim town with many governmental and educational buildings. We visited the home of Francis Sahn (Chief Floating Cloud,) one of the best Sioux dancers and orator. To his home have come many people interested in Indian folk ways. He has appeared in many movies, one of which was "They Died with their Boots on" with Errol Flynn and Olivia DeHavilland. His home was decorated with Indian objects and he showed us his various war bonnets and Indian garb, including those he wore in the movies. We had the pleasure of meeting his wife and children. Mr. Sahn showed me various basic Indian steps for a number of dances. All in all, I've had a most enjoyable visit for which I'm grateful to Mrs. Shroyer. Before leaving the reservation we stopped of near the neglected grave of the once renowned and powerful Indian Chief Sitting Bull.

My camp at Grand Forks, the U. of N.D., was another very delightful occasion. Besides having a good time teaching dancing, I've met a few most interesting folks;

Mrs. Ruth Abernathy, director of the Human Relations Organization of St. Paul, Minn., Miss Margaret Nix from Winnipeg, Canada; Victor Hehn, Donovan Nickel and Walter Filipenko, and I've also seen my buddy Lyle Rostad.

My last camp session was at the International Peace Gardens — a plot of land located in the Turtle Mountain region and set aside by the American and Canadian governments where the people of both nations may meet in friendship. The entire region is wooded, the grass is of a lush green and lakes dot the landscape. Woods that were lacking in the rest of Dakota were crowded into the Turtle Mountains. In this section of the country many Chippewa Indians can be seen. They are a forest type of Indian and these are ideal hunting grounds for them. Our campers spent a while on the Canadian side of the Peace Gardens. Where the borders meet there is a cairn monument from stones gathered from both sides of the country. On it there is a tablet that reads "To God in His glory. We two nations dedicate this garden and pledge ourselves that as long as men live we will not take up arms against one another." A very beautiful thought. There is no reason why all nations of the world can't adopt this pledge and live up to it.

I've had an opportunity to visit various remote and small towns of the state. Each section has its point of interest. The fields were a mass of color; hues of gold from various grains, green corn, purple alfalfa, sky blue flax which appeared as if the sky itself descended on earth, also fields of white blooming flax that seemed like snow flakes falling as the winds blow over their blossoms; fields yellow with sweet clover and mustard. Not all fields portrayed a scene of plenty. Many sections in Dakota suffered from hail storms and the fields were beaten down to a most heart sickening condition. The damage was great, not to speak of the lost labor.

I've also visited individual farms of my newly acquired friends—the farms of Ronney Legler, Victor Schmidt and Donovan Nickel where I was received by them and their families with the greatest cordiality and as if we were good friends of many years. All are fine lads, active and industrious and have accomplished a great many things. They are good farmers, cattle raisers and perfect horsemen. The farms in N.D. are composed of acres in the thousands and are often reckoned by miles. I've made so many new friends to mention but a few; the Offerdahls, Ronney Buehler, Neil Peters, Lee Vern Brotherton and many others. With the Evansons I've made "home" and all treated me like one of their own. It was good to see the friends I've made the previous year — all in all, it was like being home again.

Another interesting thing about N. D. is the various nationality settlements. Each section of the State has a certain population; Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Finns, Icelanders, Ukrainians, Czechs, Syrians, Indians and a great many Germans. The Ukrainians are all menonites who fled Russia in 1903 to escape Tsarist persecution and settled in N. D. and Alaska. They cover great stretches of territory and all adhere strictly to their religious beliefs for which they forsook their beloved Ukraine. Names like Nichiporenko, Filipenko, Hradenko, indicate their descent.

The Germans are all of the Palatinate, hence, Catholics, and speak a Platt Deutsch; the language the Jews adopted. I've never been in a Platt Deutsche Community before and the language was rather strange to me, since my German is the Hoch, or, Preussische Deutsch, but when they didn't understand me I substituted my German word with a Jewish word and we got along well.

The Junior camps have adopted the Lithuanian word "Pasimatysim" (Surely we shall see each other again)

as the farewell whenever a camp is closed. It is a word that expresses a hopeful sentiment. So, until next summer, I too close with, Pasimatysim, Vyts-Fin.

... AND ONE LITHUANIAN

(Episodes in the life of a patriot)

August 1937

12,000 fans, having rode cycled or trudged their way to the sports stadium at the top of the Green Hill in Kaunas, in order to cheer on to victory the Lithuanian XI in the Baltic Football Tourney, now gaze upon the spectacle being unfolded before their eyes... The brilliant sunshine of that summer afternoon, gay flags drooping lazily from the staffs placed equi-distantly around the stadium and the beautiful green carpet of luscious grass on which the chosen sportsmen of Lithuania and Esthonia wage their exhilarating battle for supremacy; all combine to provide a scene as picturesque as one could find in any part of this pretty land.

Those were happy days in Lithuania, when the flags flew, the people sang and war was remote. And why should we not be happy? Was our country not free, our Kaunas not a pretty town? Had we not, in less than 20 years of freedom, shown that we were capable of living by our own efforts just as well as other, older nations?

But things are not going well to-day. Yesterday the Latvians had beaten us by 5 goals to 1 and now the Esthonians are winning by 3 goals to nil. Why, we beat them both in the last tourney! Look at the team now — there seems to be only one man worth his salt in the Lithuanian side and that man is Marcinkus, one of the oldest players on the field. Yes, Marcinkus is a good player — winning or losing he fights all the way. Still, you would expect that from him, — he's an airman, you know... a Captain in Military Aviation Wing.

The Esthonian centre — forward swings the ball to the right wing. Back it comes into the centre... Marcinkus is there and relieves the pressure with a punt halfway down the field... We could do with more like him.

October 1939

These are trying times for the Lithuanians. The Germans and Russians have over-run neighbouring Poland and Polish refugees swarm into our land and are apprehensive as to their ultimate fate — for Russia and Germany are friends! Lithuanians too, are afraid of what the future may hold in store for them. Russian garrisons are being installed at Alytus and Vilkavishkis. They have promised to respect our neutrality and independence; but can we trust them?

A group of flying men gather around a small table in the corner of the Officer's Mess of the Military Aviation Wing airfield and a buzz of animated conversation emanates from this direction. Included in the group are some of the foremost airmen in the country; men who have grown up with the air force and who have learned not only to fly planes but also to build them. Lithuania is not a large country and has no huge factories, no well-paid designers and no highpowered engines so necessary for mass aircraft production. She does, however, produce good airmen. Was not Darius, the Atlantic airman of 1933, a product of the Aviation Wing and did not Gustainis take his famous squadron (with home-produced planes) on a grand tour of Europe, which included a visit to the famous air pageant at Hendon, where they had been presented to the Prince of Wales?

The Lithuanian airmen are restless and as the men in this group discuss their position many suggestions are put forward and many daring plans mooted. They

feel that total Russian occupation of their country, bringing with it the disbandment of the Lithuanian armed forces, is imminent. They know that Germany is marching on, with an enfeebled Europe reeling before her iron might. The Luftwaffe reigns supreme in the skies over the Continent while France and Britain are now the sole guardians of civilisation.

"...are we to stand by with our arms folded; are we to allow our planes and our life work to fall into the hands of Russia, the friend of Germany, while the Prussians squeeze the life-blood out of Europe?" — orates one embittered flyer, — "Is it not time for us to put in our widow's mite for the defence of all things civilised?"

June 1940

The Lithuanian airmen did manage to put in their "window's mite" for the defence of European civilisation. A squadron of Lithuanians managed to join the French Air Force. One after another they were shot from the skies until, with the capitulation of France, only one remained. Even this last one chose to fight on rather than surrender to the Germans and, after a perilous journey to Dakar, eventually he reached England.

February 1942

Romas Marcinkus is not very cheerful these days. He is in the R. A. F. now as a Flight Lieutenant and the lads of the R. A. F. make up a good bunch but there is not a single other Lithuanian on this 'drome in Sussex. There are Poles and Czechs, Belgians and Netherlanders, even an odd Luxembourger or two — but no Lithuanians with whom to reminisce and plan.

Marcinkus is told that there is a letter for him in the rack and he cannot think who could have sent it to him. He picks up the letter on his way to the bar and looks at the envelope with some curiosity. The handwriting seems vaguely familiar but the postmark is that of near-by town and he is certain that he knows nobody in that area. Tearing open the envelope he is surprised to find that the epistle is in Lithuanian and, having eagerly read the contents, he hurries to reply — even forgetting, in his haste, the glass of beer he had promised himself.

"Dear ———,

I was overjoyed at receiving your letter because here in England I feel unspeakably lonely. It was pleasant to read a letter written in Lithuanian and still more pleasant to learn that I am not the only Lithuanian in the British Armed Forces.

You are probably interested in knowing how it is that I find myself in England. That is a long story and as soon as we can meet I shall tell you all about it. For the time being, I can say that from the early days of the war I fought in France and, when France surrendered, I came to England via Africa, in order to continue the fight. Much — even, I might say, — very much have I had to endure but up to the present I have managed to escape death. What the future holds — no one can say. Particularly trying is the fact that throughout this period of almost three years I have had no news from home, where my mother, alone, is left. This has been a terrible time for Lithuania and I am therefore worried about the fate of my near ones. If you have any news then please write soon and let me know all that you can...

I await your answer with impatience.

Capt. Marcinkus

Marcinkus did not receive the reply for which he waited. A letter written to him was returned from his station with a laconic accompanying note from the Adjutant who... regretted to inform... "that F/Lt. Marcinkus is missing, believed killed in a recent operations."